

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 151403Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9123

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 5384

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS

SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS OF  
DRUZE VILLAGERS ALONG GOLEN CONFRONTATION LINE

REF: DAMASCUS 5281 (NOTAL)

1. UNDOF COMMANDER PHILLIP TOLD AMBASSADOR AUGUST 14 THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING IN TEL AVIV AUGUST 16 WITH ISRAELI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIALS TO PURSUE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN DRUZE VILLAGERS ON GOLAN CONFRONTATION LINE. PHILLIP OPTIMISTIC THAT THIS PROJECT WILL WORK OUT AND PREDICTED IT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE BEFORE END OF AUGUST.

2. ARRANGEMENT IS DESIGNED TO FACILITATE CONTACTS BETWEEN VILLAGERS OF MAJD ASH-SHAMS AND HADAR. PHILLIP WILL TABLE AS HIS OWN PROPOSAL THE PRINCIPLE THAT MUKHTAR OF EACH VILLAGE WILL HAVE RIGHT ON ALTERNATE WEEKS TO NAME THOSE FMAILIES TO PARTICIPATE IN VISITS. HE OBSERVED THAT IF INITIAL MEETINGS WENT SATISFACTORILY, DRUZE FROM OTHER VILLAGES WOULD REPIDLY FIND THEIR WAY TO THE MEETING SITE.

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3. ASKED ABOUT GENESIS OF THIS PROJECT, PHILLIP RECALLED THAT A SIMILAR IDEA HAD BEEN UNDER STUDY IN LATE 1975, DESIGNED FOR IMPLEMENTATION ABOUT CHRISTMAS TIME LAST YEAR. THAT PROJECT DIED WHEN THE SYRIANS REFUSED THE ISRAELI CONDITION THAT MEETINGS OCCUR IN TOWN OF KUNEITRA. ISRAELIS, ACCORDING TO PHILLIP, HAVE NOW AGREED TO MEETING POINT BETWEEN THE TWO VILLAGES WHICH THEY HAD EARLIER REJECTED.

4. LATEST PROJECT, HE SAID HAD BEEN REVIVED WITH HIM BY SYRIAN DEPUTY FONMIN AT TIME OF VISIT TO DAMASCUS OF AUSTRIAN PERMREP TO UN JANKOVIC (DATT DAMASCUS IR 6 891 0393). PHILLIP SPECULATED THAT DAMASCUS MAY HAVE FELT IMPELLED FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL REASONS TO MAKE SPECIAL GESTURE AT PRESENT JUNCTURE TO SYRIA'S DRUZE COMMUNITY

5. PHILLIP SAID HE WAS STRUCT BY THE IDENTITY OF EXPRESSIONS USED WITH HIM BY ISRAELI AND SYRIAN OFFICERS THAT THIS LIMITED CONTACT BETWEEN DRUZE VILLAGERS WOULD PROVIDE "A TEST OF THE OTHER SIDE'S GOOD INTENTIONS IN GENERAL."

6. ISRAELIS, PHILLIP ADDED, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT MEETING POINT OF VILLAGERS COULD ALSO SERVE AS CONTACT POINT FOR SYRIAN AND ISRAELI MILITARY LIAISON OFFICERS OF UNSPECIFIED RANKS. PHILLIP OPTIMISTICALLY PROJECTED AN EVENTUAL MEEING BETWEEN CHIEF ISRAELI LIAISON OFFICER LEVENSON AND SYRIAN BRIG. GENERAL TAYYARA.

7. AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT WHILE SYRIAN INITIATIVE HAD COME AT A CURIOUS TIME, ANY SUCH INTEREST IN "BUILDING BRIDGES" WAS TO BE WELCOMED. NOTED HE HAD BEEN APPREHENSIVE THAT PUBLICITY GIVEN TO PROJECT IN RECENT RADIO INTERVIEW BY DEFMIN PERES MIGHT HAVE FROZEN THE PROJECT. PHILLIP SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE COULD TELL, PERES' STATEMENT HAD CAUSED NO RIPPLES IN DAMASCUS.

8. PHILLIP HAS OFFERED PROVIDE US WITH BRIEFING ON HIS TALKS IN ISRAEL ABOUT PROJECT ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 17.

9. COMMENT: THE MAJOR SYRIAN PROPAGANDA BLAST ISSUED BY A  
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"RESPONSIBLE SOURCE" OVER DAMASCUS RADIO AUGUST 14 ACCUSING SADAT PERSONELLY IN STRONGEST TERMS OF TREASON FOR HIS DESLINGS WITH ISRAEL, COUPLED WITH SARCASTIC ATTACKS ON LAA COMMANDER KHATIB FOR ALLOWING CONTACTS WITH ISRAELI LIAISOON OFFICERS RENDERS THIS APPARENTLY ON-GOING GOLAN EXERCISE CLOSE TO INCREDIBLE.  
MURPHY

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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